What is claimed is:

1. A method of retrieving desired phone number information using an network protocol, comprising the steps of:

a user entering into the electronic device a network address of a party whose phone number information is to be retrieved;

the electronic device sending a request to a server in accordance the network protocol, the request containing a predictable variant of said address; and

the server sending the desired phone number to the electronic device.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the desired phone number information is a single phone number, comprising the further step of the electronic device automatically dialing the desired phone number.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the desired phone number information is a hypertext phone directory page, comprising the further step of the electronic device displaying the hypertext phone directory page.

4. The method of Claim 3, comprising the further steps of:

the user selecting a link within the hypertext phone directory page; and

the electronic device cooperating with the server to retrieve and display a further hypertext phone directory page.

5. The method of Claim 3, comprising the further steps of:

the user selecting a single phone number within the hypertext phone directory page; and

the electronic device automatically dialing the selected phone num-

ber.

6.   A method of establishing a desired telecommunications connection, comprising the steps of:

inputting a character string entered by a user;

determining whether or not the character string is a telephone number;

if the string is a telephone number, establishing the desired telecommunications connection directly using the telephone number;

if the character string is not a telephone number, establishing a preliminary telecommunications connection using the character string;

receiving a telephone number during the course of the preliminary telecommunications connection; and

using the telephone number to establish the desired telecommunications connection.

7.   The method of Claim 6, wherein the character string is a an email address and the preliminary telecommunications connection is established with an email server in accordance with an email protocol such as Simple Mail Transfer Protocol.

8.   The method of Claim 6, wherein the string is a resource locator and the preliminary telecommunications connection is established with a hyper-media server in accordance with a hyper-media protocol such as Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol.

9.   An electronic system comprising:

a data processing core, including memory;

coupled to the data processing core:

a modem;

a circuit-switched telecommunications transceiver;

a packet-switched telecommunications transceiver; and

I/O circuitry;

the combination further comprising stored program instructions within memory including instructions for:

inputting a character string entered by a user;

determining whether or not the character string is a telephone number;

if the string is a telephone number, establishing the desired telecommunications connection directly using the telephone number;

if the character string is not a telephone number, establishing a preliminary telecommunications connection using the character string;

receiving a telephone number during the course of the preliminary telecommunications connection; and

displaying the telephone number or using the telephone number to establish the desired telecommunications connection.

10.   The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the electronic system is a smart cellular telephone.

11.   The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the electronic system is a personal computer coupled to the public switched telephone network.

12.   The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the electronic system is a smart deskset telephone coupled to the public switched telephone network.

13.   An electronic system for use in establishing a desired telecommunications connection, comprising:

a data processing core, including memory;

coupled to the data processing core:

a packet-switched telecommunications transceiver; and

I/O circuitry;

the combination further comprising stored program instructions within memory including instructions for:

receiving an address of a desired party entered by a user into the electronic device;

sending a request to a server in accordance with an Internet protocol, the request containing a predictable variant of said address; and

receiving from the server a communications string of the desired party.

14. A communications method using an electronic device, comprising:

a user inputting to the electronic device an electronic address of a party with which communication is to be established;

transparently prefacing the communication with a network communications exchange, established based on the electronic address, to obtain information for communicating with said party; and

the electronic device using said information to communicate with said party.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the information is a telephone number.

16. The method of Claim 14, wherein the information is a cryptographic key.